

## Case 3367

***Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 (currently *Ceutorhynchus contractus*; Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation of the specific name**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, is to conserve the specific name *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 for a well-known species of European weevil by suppression of a little used senior primary homonym *Curculio contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785. A lectotype is designated for *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802. The replacement proposed by Colonnelli (2004) of *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 by *Ceuthorhynchus pallipes* Crotch, 1866, which is applied only to a geographically very restricted taxon of doubtful status, is opposed.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; CURCULIONIDAE; *Curculio*; *Ceutorhynchus*; *Ceutorhynchus contractus*; *Ceutorhynchus minutus*; *Ceutorhynchus pallipes*; Europe; weevil.

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1. Marsham (1802, p. 250) described *Curculio contractus* (currently *Ceutorhynchus contractus*), a common European species of CURCULIONIDAE. Marsham's collection was mostly acquired by J.F. Stephens, whose collection is in the Natural History Museum, London. Marsham's specimens are usually distinguished by a small circular, white label (Hammond, 1972). In the Stephens collection there are nine specimens standing under the name *contractus*. One of these bears Marsham's white label; it is placed as the middle insect in the top row of three (number 2). These insects are all *Curculio contractus* (currently *Ceutorhynchus contractus*), with the exception of one specimen which is a small *Curculio obstrictus* Marsham, 1802 (currently *Ceutorhynchus obstrictus*) (number 9); this specimen is not the one bearing Marsham's label. Specimen number 2, bearing Marsham's white label, is here designated the lectotype of *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802.

2. The name *contractus* Marsham, 1802 has been used consistently in various combinations for nearly 200 years; a list of 161 references, including citations in the economic literature, is held by the Commission Secretariat.

3. However, it has long been known that the name *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 is a junior primary homonym of *Curculio contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785 (p. 126) (e.g. Kloet & Hincks, 1945; Pope, 1977; Colonnelli, 1998). The last author discussed the issue in detail, pointing out that the identity of *Curculio contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy could not be ascertained, though he stated that it was certainly not a species of *Ceutorhynchus*. Colonnelli concluded that, under the Code and 'although this is not in the interest of stability', Marsham's name should be rejected

because of homonymy with *Curculio contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785 and also because of priority of the name *Curculio minutus* Reich, 1797 (p. 11) (Colonnelli, 1998, p. 112). According to Colonnelli (1998) the synonymy between *Curculio minutus* Reich, 1797 and *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 was established by Sturm (1843, p. 222) and the older name was used by Gistel (1856, p. 245).

4. More recently, it has been shown by Colonnelli (2004) that *Curculio minutus* Reich, 1797 is a junior primary homonym of *Curculio minutus* Drury, 1773 (currently *Arrenodus minutus*) (p. 95 and index) and therefore is currently invalid.

5. Colonnelli (2004, p. 45) proposed using *Ceutorhynchus pallipes* Crotch, 1866 (p. 133) (originally *Ceuthorhynchus pallipes*) to replace *Ceutorhynchus contractus* (Marsham, 1802) and *Ceutorhynchus minutus* (Reich, 1797). Although it has been suggested that at the time of Crotch's publication the status of the form *pallipes* was infrasubspecific, Crotch's *Ceuthorhynchus pallipes* was clearly established as a species-group name. Crotch (1866, p. 133) wrote "C. pallipes. – Under this name I have intended to designate the curious variety found hitherto in Lundy Island by Mr. Wollaston. It resembles C. contractus in all particulars, but has perfectly pale legs, and is certainly quite mature, several specimens having been captured". Crotch used the term 'variety' in a vernacular rather than taxonomic sense, as he did not say what species it is a 'variety' of, and expressed it as a binomen.

6. However, Crotch's intention, clearly set out in his paper, was to apply his name (*Ceuthorhynchus pallipes*) to a taxon restricted to the small island of Lundy which lies off the north coast of the county of Devon in south-west England. With one exception (see para. 7) the name *pallipes* has only ever been applied to this taxon (e.g. Mitford, 1913; Blair, 1932; Hoffmann, 1954; Compton et al., 2002).

7. Lack (1931, p. 279) applied the name *Ceuthorhynchus contractus* var. *pallipes* Crotch, 1866 to two specimens he collected on the remote island of St. Kilda off the western coast of Scotland. These are currently referred to *Ceutorhynchus insularis* Dieckmann, 1971, of which they are paratypes. They also represent the subspecies *C. i. testaceipes* Dieckmann, 1971.

8. *Ceutorhynchus pallipes* is unlikely to be a subspecies of *Ceutorhynchus contractus* as it is sympatric on Lundy Island with the nominotypical form (Mitford, 1913; Compton et al., 2002). However, its status is the subject of ongoing research, including molecular studies (Compton et al., 2002) and therefore at present its taxonomic status is a matter of uncertainty. These studies include investigation of a range of island taxa in *Ceutorhynchus*, and are important in determining biogeography, dispersal, colonisation and conservation of biodiversity in the group. It would clearly be very confusing to substitute the name *Ceutorhynchus pallipes* Crotch, 1866 for the species known for so long as *Ceutorhynchus contractus* (Marsham, 1802). Moreover, the name *pallipes* Crotch, 1866 may not itself prove stable as a result of current research. Appendix B (1) of the Code states: 'it is of especial importance that a name should not be transferred to a taxon distinct from that to which it is generally applied'.

9. The name *Curculio contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785 does not qualify for reversal of precedence under the conditions of Article 23.9.1.1, as it was used as a valid name by Colonnelli (1998) who acknowledged that *Curculio contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785 is a senior primary homonym of *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 and suggested that the name *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 has

to be replaced. The name *Curculio minutus* Reich, 1797 does not currently threaten *Curculio contractus* Marsham, 1802 because *Curculio minutus* Reich, 1797 is an invalid name—a junior homonym of *Curculio minutus* Drury, 1773.

10. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to suppress the name *contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785, as published in the binomen *Curculio contractus*, and all uses of the name *Curculio contractus* before Marsham (1802) for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *contractus* Marsham, 1802, as published in the binomen *Curculio contractus*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *contractus* Geoffroy in Fourcroy, 1785, as published in the binomen *Curculio contractus* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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